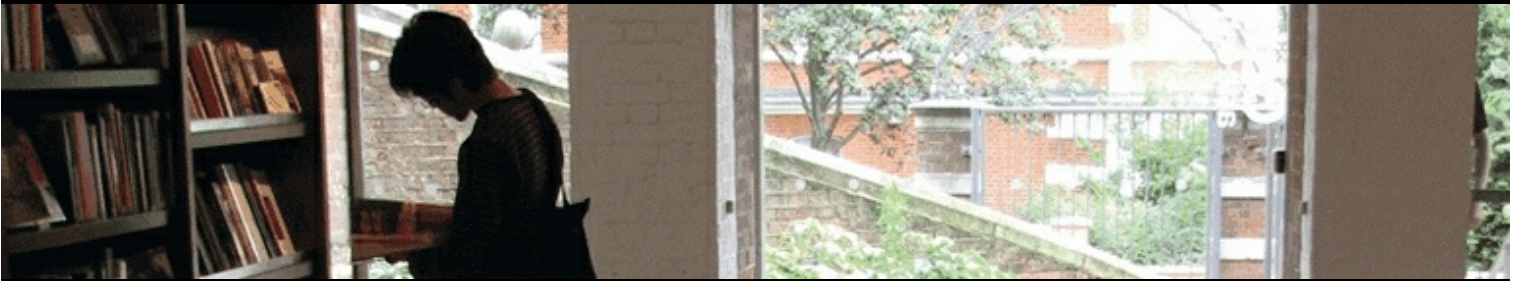




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## Simple Productivity: 10 Ways to Do More by Focusing on the Essentials - lifehack.org

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[Simple Productivity: 10 Ways to Do More by Focusing on the Essentials - lifehack.org](#)

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## How to Look Approachable

Posted on [May 13, 2007](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

[Parties](#) and other social functions can really be a drag sometimes. You stand by the punchbowl or sit down on a sofa and watch everybody else mingling, but nobody seems to want to chat with you. You're [attractive](#), [witty](#), and [interesting](#); what's wrong with these people? It could be that you're sending out the wrong signals. No matter how [beautiful](#) you are or how good a [conversationalist](#) you can be, if you look intimidating or preoccupied, people may be afraid to talk to you. Here's how to use your [body language](#) to look more [friendly](#) and approachable.

## Steps

1.

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### ARCHIVES

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Folded arms act as a barrier between you and the world. 🔑

Be aware of what your body is saying. We all speak with [body language](#), and you don't have to actually say anything to communicate a message to others. Unfortunately, your body may not always say what you want it to. If your gestures and posture are saying "I'm too busy to talk," or "Leave me alone," it's not likely people will approach you. Other people watch your body for cues, so it's important to [pay attention to what cues you're displaying](#).

2. Open up. When people are uncomfortable in a situation they have a tendency to display closed body language. Examples include folding your arms in front of you, hunching over, and positioning your body so that you're angled away from others. These signals imply that you'd rather be [left alone](#). If you'd rather *not* be left alone, make sure you're displaying open body language by angling yourself toward other people, sitting or standing with an upright (but not stiff) posture, and uncrossing your arms.
3. Use your eyes. Your eyes are not only your window to the world, they're also other people's window into you. If you bury your head in a book, stare at the floor, or look up at the ceiling, you close that window. This is all well and good if you don't want to be bothered on your commute to work, but if you want to look friendly and approachable, scan your environment with your eyes, and don't be afraid to make eye contact with people.
- 4.



A genuine smile uses the whole face, especially the eyes. 🔍

[Smile](#). A warm, inviting smile can put anyone at ease, and it also makes you look like you're having a great time, which makes people want to be around you and get in on the fun. If you catch someone's eye, be sure to give a little smile, and be sure to smile often during [small talk](#). It lets people know you appreciate talking to them. Smile with your eyes. When you do make eye contact, don't stare or glare. Instead, soften your eye expression and make your eyes "smile" or "twinkle" to show that you're friendly and interested in talking to the other person. If you're not sure how to smile with your eyes, get in front of a mirror and practice smiling without using your mouth. The eyes are actually more important than the mouth to what most people consider a "genuine" smile.

5.



One example of a nervous self-comfort gesture... 🔍



and another. Unless you're drinking from the glass, don't hold it near your mouth. It creates a barrier between you and others.

Beware self-comfort gestures. Nervousness manifests itself in body language in many ways. It's okay to feel nervous, but if you really want to socialize and meet people you should be careful not to *appear* nervous. Touching your hand to your face, especially putting it over your mouth, or, if you have a drink, holding your glass by your mouth can give people the impression that you're not interested in talking to them. Metronomic gestures, such as foot tapping, can signal impatience or [boredom](#), so people may think you don't have time to talk or aren't interested in [conversation](#). Other nervous habits — picking at your cuticles or [biting your fingernails](#) for instance — can also make you appear distant or lost in thought. Once again, just pay attention to what your body is saying, and you can avoid putting up these barriers.

6. Approach others. If people aren't approaching you, why not go to them? Nothing makes you look more [outgoing](#) and approachable than actively seeking out people and talking to them. If you're in an environment where you don't know anybody, the longer you wait alone, the more uncomfortable you're bound to feel.
7. [Have a good time](#). Your body language usually communicates your deepest emotions at any given time, and it's not easy to fake body language. The best way to look approachable, then, is to actually enjoy yourself in social interactions. If you feel anxious in social settings, or if you're uncomfortable around people of the [opposite sex](#), get over your anxiety by seeking out opportunities to interact with people. If you have especially strong [social anxiety](#) (a common condition), you may find it helpful to seek out counseling or talk to your doctor.

# Tips

- Compliment others. It's a great way to show interest in other people and start conversations. Most people just love getting a compliment and positive attention, and talking about themselves. Just be sure it's sincere and appropriate. Ask follow-up questions to keep the conversation moving.
- In a social situation, such as a party, offer to help out in some way. Your host or hostess will likely be appreciative, and sometimes having a specific task may help you feel more focused than just standing around feeling awkward. It's a great way to meet others and be sociable without having to feel you don't know what to do. Excellent tasks: cutting vegetables, washing dishes, keeping the music going, picking up used plates, etc. Don't over-focus and use the task as an excuse for not engaging in conversation, and vice versa.
- In uncomfortable situations, you may find that you touch your face a bit more than usual or, if you have a drink, you may hold a glass in front of your face. These are unconscious protective reactions that signals to others that you don't want to be approached. As long as you're aware of these gestures, however, you can avoid them.
- Reading a newspaper or wearing headphones can ease the monotony of a [long train ride](#), but in situations where you want to look approachable, lose these props.
- Position yourself for [conversation](#). If you're standing up, but everybody else is sitting down (or vice versa) people will find it difficult and somewhat awkward to talk to you. If you want to talk to someone, or if you're already talking with someone, position yourself so that you can comfortably talk.
- Do not gauge someone's interest level based solely on how approachable or unapproachable they appear. The person may not realize what their body language conveys.
- [Body language](#) suggests a mirror issue. That is... Do you like yourself? Are you very perfectionist? Do you talk with your neighbors? To animals? Do you care for your pet? This could help to keep you aware of your actual tastes and less of the tastes of your friends.

# Warnings

- There may indeed be times when you don't want to look approachable. Closed body language can be useful to fend off potential attacks, to get rid of unwanted suitors or to tell panhandlers you don't want to be bothered.

- Remember that it's easy to misread body language. Next time you're at a party and see someone huddled in a corner with arms crossed and eyes on the floor, keep in mind that they might just be uncomfortable because they don't know anyone. Who knows? They might be an interesting person who would welcome your approach.

Posted in [Personal performance](#)

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## When NOT to measure something

Posted on [April 20, 2007](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

We're always talking about why it is so critical to have performance measures, what is most important to measure, how to design meaningful measures, how to measure the intangible things. But there is a lot of value to knowing when measuring something just isn't the best idea.

## Don't measure it if you have no intention of managing it.

Is it really responsible to be measuring something you have no intention of doing anything about? If it's because you were told to measure it, then you have at least two choices.

You can talk to whoever has demanded to measure it, and in the spirit of authentic curiosity, explore their and your points of view and negotiate a more meaningful measure, or drop it entirely if your existing measures sufficiently cover the most important results you are responsible for managing.

Or you can talk to whoever has demanded to measure it, also in the spirit of authentic curiosity, ask for their help to determine what kind of response you should be taking to the measure, it's priority over your other measures, and the guidelines for how much of your resources to throw at it when it goes south.

## Don't measure it if the cost of measuring outweighs the value of knowing.

Many data collection systems, like surveys, cost lots of money. Especially when you have to consider factors like measuring over

wide geographic areas or measuring to high levels of accuracy or measuring very rare phenomena.

Get in the habit of checking if the likely gain of using the measure (like improvement in sales or reduction of waste) has a smaller net impact on the bottom line than does the cost of measuring it. If you can't show a decent positive return on investment for measuring something, don't bother. How else could you have used the time and money to impact your business' or organisation's success?

## **Don't measure it for old times' sake.**

Do you take on more new measures that you let go? Letting go of measures seems to be such a psychological battle – we hang on to them because they're already being tracked and we might need them again someday. Fine. Keep collecting the data (if it doesn't cost too much), but stop reporting the measure!

It's time to test if there is something more important to put that time and resource into. Perhaps to focus on other higher priority measures, or to spend some time designing more meaningful measures for your current strategy. Unimportant measures will slow you down and waste your time and energy.

## **Don't measure it if it will be a big stick.**

Measures have the worst reputation of being used as big sticks to beat people's performance into shape (or to at least attempt this). Measures can be very indispensable in managing people's performance, but the big stick approach means using measures to point blame or [CYA](#).

You'll see a ripple of fear and defensiveness in every direction around the one who yields such a measure, and it will build into a wave of destruction. If you don't have a performance improvement culture, if there is a real risk that the measure will be used as a big stick, then avoid measuring it. Put the time and effort into some open and candid dialogue to explore the results that matter and how to improve them.

## **Don't measure it if you're**

# already measuring too much.

Drowning in measures? Do you have more measures than you have time and resources to review and improve? Then don't take on any more! Too many measures is often worse than not enough measures. Overwhelm is so much more debilitating than scarcity when it comes to measures. At least with scarcity you have the time and energy to move in the direction of a concise set of meaningful measures. But with overwhelm, you usually feel stuck and unable to move in any direction at all.

Instead of working on more measures, take stock of the measures you have already, cull those that really aren't that important, and put your focus on just 3 or 4 measures at a time, improving performance in all results systematically.

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## Clearing your email inbox

Posted on [March 30, 2007](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

The truth is that you probably *can* take the average email inbox — even a relatively neglected one — from full to zero in about 20 minutes. It mostly depends on how much you really want to be done with it. The dirty little secret, of course, is that you don't do it by *responding* to each of those emails but by ruthlessly processing them. Is that how you thought this worked? *Answering 500 emails in 20 minutes?* Jeez, it's no wonder you're such a mess. Your cognitive dissonance is epic.

Here's the deal: your email has been accumulating because you don't have the time to answer it properly, which is certainly reasonable and accurate. You also fear losing track of the email you haven't responded to — that it will fall between the cracks. This fear is also reasonable and accurate. But you're just as keenly aware that with the backlog of email you have plus the increasing rate of incoming messages you receive each day, you can't possibly ever catch up. This, sadly, is also entirely reasonable and accurate. It's all reasonable and it's all accurate, but come on: something's gotta give.

There's an easy but non-obvious way to win at this Catch-22: *you cheat*. You rewrite the rules. You adapt at a higher level. You don't answer them all. Not even most of them.



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## How to cope with interruptions at work

Posted on [March 29, 2007](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

You need to get that report finished today and a colleague comes over to the desk to talk about another project. Then you have a shedload of emails to read. A salesperson rings to tell you about a conference that has not sold enough places. By the end of the day the report is still unfinished and you stay late to finish it whilst everyone else goes home or to the pub. What to do?

Emails and phone are easy to deal with. You can switch them off. This rarely works with people. Consider whether an interruption is useful or a distraction. Often the unscheduled chat is very useful and more time-efficient and timely than a formal meeting scheduled for two weeks time. Things get done. Therefore try to schedule periods when you are available to talk.

When you want to shut out the world put on earphones. Even if you are not listening to anything most people understand the clear signal that you are unavailable.

Failing that a Do Not Disturb sign can work. Just don't expect the boss to pay any attention to it!

Posted in [Uncategorized](#)

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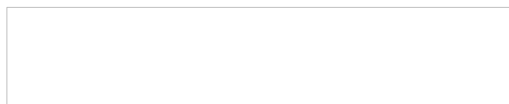
## MJ PEAK PERFORMANCE: Snooze, You Win - Improve your mental and physical performance by power napping

Posted on [March 25, 2007](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

### Snooze, You Win

*According to new studies, nothing tunes up mind and body like a good nap. But there's an art to catching the right kind of z's.*

When billionaire adventurer  
Steve Fossett broke the record



for around-the-world solo jet flight last March, he slept just 60 minutes in 67 hours of flight time — 60 minutes broken into two- and three-minute naps. “I slept when I needed it and awoke refreshed,” he says. Fossett, who holds world records in ballooning, sailing, and flying, adds that none of his feats could have been done without these micro-variety “power naps.”

So what makes a power nap effective? Think of it as an investment with the greatest return in the least amount of time, a kind of super-efficient sleep that fits nicely in a high-pressure schedule: say, between business meetings or in the minutes before a game.

Napping in general benefits heart functioning, hormonal maintenance, and cell repair, says Dr. Sara Mednick, a scientist at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies who is at the forefront of napping research. A power nap, says Mednick, simply maximizes these benefits by getting the sleeper into and out of rejuvenative sleep as fast as possible. No surprise that Lance Armstrong’s coach, Chris Carmichael, says that “naps were critical in his overall training plan.” In Manhattan, napping has become a lucrative business: MetroNaps in the Empire State Building provides darkened cot-like redoubts that attract Broadway actors between shows as well as investment bankers who otherwise would fall asleep at their desks. And in Iraq, U.S. Marine commanders have mandated a power nap before patrols.

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## **Convince Your Boss to Let you Work from Home**

Posted on [March 24, 2007](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

According to the 2003 Census [report](#), the average commute time is 38 minutes each way for some parts of the country. That is 76 minutes each day, over 6 hours per week or 41 work days each year. If you live somewhere that has a long commute time, it is easy to see how much time is just spent driving back and forth. If you were able to eliminate the commute even one day per week, you would save over

65 hours per year. That is over 8 work days of time or equivalent to an extra 1.5 weeks of vacation.

There are three basic ways to eliminate or shorten your commute:

1. Start your own business.
2. Telecommute and work for your current employer from home.
3. Switch to a shorter work week.

Switching to a shorter work week is a nice possibility, but for this article, let's assume that working from home is technically possible and concentrate on a strategy to get your boss to say "yes". There is no magic formula, but if you follow these five steps, it will go a long way toward increasing your odds for success.

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## Double Your Reading Rate

Posted on [March 24, 2007](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

Reading is an incredibly important skill to have. Just about any form of education will involve reading, sometimes almost exclusively. You can often make yourself an expert on an intellectual subject just by reading enough in that area. But despite the incredible importance of reading, most people are wildly inefficient at it. Like a child that never goes beyond a crawl, most people have enough reading skills to move around, but they are far from running.

Over a year ago I picked up the book, [Breakthrough Rapid Reading](#) by Peter Kump, an expert in the area of speed-reading. From that purchase I took the time and energy to study other ways to improve my reading skill. I recently got a chance to finish Eckhart Tolle's, *The Power of Now*, and I read the last half of the book in under forty minutes.

When I did the initial test at the start of the book, I could read at 450 words per minute. A little above the average of around 300, but nothing spectacular. By using the techniques I'll describe in this article I was able to increase that rate to around 900 words per minute in average situations, at least doubling of my reading rate.

I believe there are six major keys to improving your reading skill. Like

all skills, success only comes through practice, so just reading this article won't be enough. But if you are interested in how you might be able to make dramatic improvements in both speed and comprehension, I've found these six points to be the best start.

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Posted in [Uncategorized](#)

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## How to Detect Lies - Become a Lie Detector

Posted on [March 16, 2007](#) | [2 Comments](#)

### Introduction to Detecting Lies:

The following techniques to telling if someone is lying are often used by police, and security experts. This knowledge is also useful for managers, employers, and for anyone to use in everyday situations where telling the truth from a lie can help prevent you from being a victim of fraud/scams and other deceptions.

*Warning: Sometimes Ignorance is bliss; after gaining this knowledge, you may be hurt when it is obvious that someone is lying to you.*

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Posted in [NLP](#)

→ **2 Comments**

## Eye Direction and Lying

Posted on [March 16, 2007](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

## Eye Movement and Direction and How it Can Reveal the Truth or a Lie

This is a continuation of [How to Detect Lies](#). Many of the comments by our visitors have asked about how eye direction can indicate the presence of a lie.

So can the direction a person's eyes are looking reveal whether or not they are making a truthful statement? Short answer: *sort of*. But, it isn't as simple as some recent television shows or movies make it seem. In these shows a detective will deduce a person is being

untruthful simply because they looked to the left or right while making a statement.

In reality, it would be foolish to make such a snap judgement without further investigation... but the technique does have some merit. So, here it is... read, ponder and test it on your friends and family to see how reliable it is for yourself.

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